

Erie County Opiate Epidemic Task Force Meeting Minutes



Location: Erie County Fire Academy

Date: Tuesday, 6 Dec 2016

Time: 5:15 - 7:15 PM

Attendees:

Agenda items

1. The group is pursuing a Tree of Remembrance to be put up in the Rath Building. Details should be finalized by 9 December.
2. Discussion with Charles from "Addict 2 Addict Peer & Family Support." The organization's activities include hosting family support groups at various locations in Erie County (Buffalo, Akron, Hamburg, Cheektowaga). They are also hosting a Community Forum on Saturday, 17 December, from 2-4 PM at the Frank Merriweather Library.
3. Discussion of interventions and "voluntary vs. mandated" treatment. Some people favor aggressive intervention, to get the person who uses diverted into treatment before they have self-inflicted too much damage to themselves and their future careers. However, interventions and "interventionists" aren't very effective; rehabilitation efforts are most effective when the person who uses has mental and emotional "buy-in" in addition to a safe physical environment. There is general agreement that the short-term treatment paid for by insurance companies (up to 28 days) is wholly inadequate.
4. Discussion of mental health and substance abuse; many attendees feel that the two health issues go hand-in-hand, and that treatment (whether in-patient or out-patient) is more effective when it addresses both aspects.
5. "YouTube initiative": the group is planning to make a series of videos addressing "how to speak to someone who is addicted."
6. Memorial Wall: One of the groups in attendance (Seneca Strong?) has built a portable wall to commemorate those people who have passed away from their addictions. This workgroup is considering something similar.
7. NYS Opiate Court: A new court (similar to the county's "drug court") is being created at the state level.
8. Next scheduled meeting: Tuesday, 3 Jan 2016.